

Programme Completion Review – September 2021

Title: BRAC Strategic Partnership Arrangement - Phase II (SPA II)		
Final Programme Spend £ (full life): £221,915,025	Review Date:	June 2021
Programme Code: [AMP ID#] 204916	Start Date: April 2016	End Date: March 2021

Summary of Programme Performance

Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021			
Programme Score	A	A	A	A	A			
Residual Risk Exposure Rating	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Major	Major			
DevTracker Link to Business Case (and any addendum):	https://iati.fcdo.gov.uk/iati_documents/5608832.odt							
DevTracker Links to all logframes used during programme lifetime:	https://iati.fcdo.gov.uk/iati_documents/60028737.xlsx							

List of Acronyms

BEP	BRAC Education Programme
BHP	BRAC Humanitarian Programme
BPD	BRAC Procurement Department
CCP	Climate Change Programme
CEP	Community Empowerment Programme
CHW	Community Health Workers
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DFID	Department for International Development
DLAC	District Legal Aid Committee
ERP	Enterprise Resource Planning
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GJD	Gender Justice and Diversity
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
HCMP	Humanitarian Crisis Management Programme
HNPP	Health, Nutrition and Population Programme
HRLS	Human Rights and Legal Aid Services
MEAL	Monitoring Evaluation Accountability and Learning
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoWCA	Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
MTR	Mid-term Review
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PRL	Programme Development, Resource Mobilisation and Learning
PWD	Person(s) with Disabilities
RF	Results Framework
RMS	Risk Management Services
ROI	Return On Investment
SDP	Skills Development Programme
SPA II	Strategic Partnership Arrangement, Phase II
ToC	Theory of Change
TWG	Technical Working Group
UDP	Urban Development Programme
UPG	Ultra-poor graduation
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
VfM	Value for money
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

A. Summary and Overview

Description of the programme and what it has achieved

The second phase of FCDO's Strategic Partnership Arrangement (SPA II) with BRAC ran for five years, April 2016 – March 2021. It provided unearmarked flexible funding of £221.8 million for BRAC's development and humanitarian programmes in Bangladesh. SPA II was co-funded by Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and by BRAC itself. An additional monitoring and evaluation component of £115,025 was managed by FCDO. The programme's total value was reduced by £2 million in July 2020 (from £224.5 million to £222.5 million) as part of an Official Development Assistance (ODA) reprioritisation exercise. This Project Completion Review covers the full five years of SPA II, with a specific focus on results reported by BRAC from January – December 2020.

There were three pillars to SPA II:

1. Support to BRAC's development programmes to improve access to quality basic services and help the poorest people in Bangladesh to graduate from extreme poverty.
2. Support to BRAC's organisational reform from a donor-funded NGO into a self-sustaining organisation that proves the viability of innovative solutions to development problems and influences policy to leverage long-term, Government-financed, poverty reduction.
3. A knowledge partnership between BRAC and donor partners to share knowledge of how to tackle persistent development challenges in Bangladesh and globally and support joint advocacy.

BRAC's programmes during the SPA II period focused on improved access to quality basic services (education and skills; water, sanitation and hygiene; and health and nutrition); ultra-poor graduation and livelihoods; and women's rights.

Ninety three percent of FCDO's funding through SPA II was spent directly on BRAC's programmes. The remaining 7% supported BRAC's organisational reform, long-term sustainability and improvement of knowledge management.

Major Achievements

The programme scored an A. A summary of the major achievements of SPA II follows:

1. With SPA II funding, BRAC supported almost 84.08 million poor, vulnerable and marginalised people through development programmes.
2. BRAC's Urban Programme Portfolio evolved significantly during the SPA II period, following a recommendation from SPA I. At the end of SPA II, BRAC's Urban Programme had supported 920,000 urban slum dwellers to improve their living conditions. The programme is now operating in 400 slums in 20 cities and towns. This strong urban presence allowed BRAC to be one of the fastest responders during the COVID-19 pandemic targeting health and socio-economic impacts.
3. BRAC has developed very strong senior leadership following SPA II Mid-Term Review (MTR) recommendations. In 2019, the organisation developed a succession plan focusing on the continuity of its vision, mission and strategic directions. As part of a carefully planned transition, Sir Fazle Hasan Abed, the founder of BRAC retired from his role as Board Chairperson and Stitching BRAC International Governing Bodies in August 2019, handing over to two independent chairs. A new Executive Director of BRAC Bangladesh was appointed around the same time. The new senior leadership has successfully managed the transition, despite the challenges of Sir Fazle's death in late 2019 and the COVID pandemic.
4. BRAC has successfully put in place the basic IT structure to support a digitalised Information Management System. This has enabled the organisation to streamline its Monitoring Evaluation Accountability and Learning (MEAL) systems of 16 programmes aligned with BRAC's Theory of Change (ToC) and Strategy (2021-25). When fully completed, the revised approach to MEAL will lead to increased efficiencies by having a real time data-driven decision making process.
5. BRAC has also significantly improved its Risk Management System during SPA II. It has developed a strong Risk Management Framework that allows regular analysis, monitor and update by the senior leadership team. In addition, with FCDO support under SPA II, BRAC has developed and implemented a comprehensive safeguarding strategy. Safeguarding cases are now managed by a dedicated team of experts.

Major lessons learned, evidence generated and recommendations

Lessons Learned and Recommendations

1. BRAC has demonstrated proven models of reaching the poorest with basic services (health, education, nutrition, WASH and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and sustainably lifting them out of poverty, and is increasing aligned with Government to ensure the BRAC activities do not displace Government services. Although there will be no

further UK funding through SPA, BRAC may secure funding for these programmes from FCDO bilateral programmes or from other development partners to continue its commitment to Leaving No-one Behind.

2. The Cost Recovery Model, pursued by BRAC with strong support from DFID/FCDO, may not be the best option to reach the poorest and most marginalised. This has become more relevant as a large number of 'new poor' have emerged due to COVID-19. BRAC's innovations and targeted programmes are well placed to support those populations.
3. With technical support through SPA II, BRAC has introduced a robust Value for Money (VfM) Framework, which has already proven to be useful for the organisation to maximise its impact. This is, however, still at an early stage - BRAC should continue its efforts with the support of senior leadership so that a strong culture of VfM is embedded within the organisation, at all levels.
4. During SPA II, BRAC made stronger efforts to influence Government policy by bringing evidence from the grassroots, although progress was slow. Building on this, BRAC should develop a robust advocacy and engagement plan that identifies policy areas it can influence. This can include collaborations with the Government and NGOs to address difficult development challenges, which Government or NGOs alone cannot solve (e.g. social protection targeting, nationwide scaling up of UPG, mitigating climate change impacts).
5. BRAC's progress with mainstreaming disability inclusion over the SPA II period has been very promising. BRAC now has the potential to emerge as a model for other development organisations in Bangladesh. BRAC should invest in documenting lessons and sharing its experiences with development partners.
6. BRAC has developed a number of innovative, cost-effective approaches that can have a transformative impact on the lives of the poorest and most marginalised. These are very relevant for Bangladesh, especially with the ongoing challenges posed by COVID-19. FCDO should consider how innovations nurtured during the two phases of SPA can be integrated in present and future programmes in collaboration with BRAC.

How this report was conducted

This was a desk-based, relatively light-touch review because of the ongoing pandemic. A core BHC Dhaka review team was formed with eight members. The TOR for the review is attached. This review was led by a social development adviser and supplemented by two economists, a private sector development adviser, and colleagues from the finance, commercial and programme teams. Review team members facilitated a total of 18 reflective sessions with different programme teams/departments of BRAC. In addition, the team attended two separate meetings with the Executive Director of BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD) and ex-vice chairperson of BRAC to reflect on SPA II's contribution in BRAC's organisational transformation. The team also reviewed BRAC's end of programme self-assessment, six-monthly, and annual progress reports, Value for Money (VfM) reports and reports on the Results Framework. Moreover, the team analysed various research findings provided by BRAC to document evidence of promising practices and lessons learned. This review also consolidated information from FCDO's previous Annual Reviews (2016-2019) and the Mid-Term Review of SPA II conducted by DFAT. Due to the COVID situation in Bangladesh, the review team was unable to undertake any field visits as part of the PCR process.

Actions following approval of this report

Despite plans for an FCDO contribution to the third phase of SPA having been cancelled due to the ODA budget cuts in April 2021, BRAC remains an important partner for FCDO in Bangladesh. FCDO should take steps to ensure that the benefits gained, and the relationships developed, over ten years of SPA are not lost. FCDO Team Leaders should actively consider whether and how BRAC can support delivery of FCDO objectives in Bangladesh.

The SPA itself will continue, with BRAC and Australia remaining committed, and Canada joining the partnership. BRAC, Australia and Canada have asked FCDO to remain engaged with the SPA, and to attend Steering Committee meetings. The review team strongly recommends that FCDO should take up this offer.

B: Theory of Change and Outcome Assessment

Overall assessment of programme outcomes, sustainability and VfM

Starting point	Final result
Budget: £224.5 million	£ 221.9 million
Timeline: 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2021	13 April 2016 to 31 March 2021
Outcomes Target	Achievement
1.1) 400,000 households graduated from ultra-poverty (90% graduation rate)	1.1) 412,634 (96% graduation rate)
2.1) 6 million families living in poverty adopt diversified, client-centric and low risk financial services	2.1) 4.7 million

3.1) BRAC school students have better learning outcomes than the national average - higher pass rates in national exams – Primary Education Completion Examination (PECE), Junior School Certificate (JSC) and Secondary School Certificate (SSC)	3.1) PECE: BRAC 99.2% ; National 96.7% JSC: BRAC operated schools 98.6% ; BRAC supported schools 82.5% ; National: 83.1% SSC: BRAC 92.6% ; National 81.8%
3.2a) 50% of students in the BRAC education programme are girls	3.2a) 55.1%
3.2b) 50% of students in BRAC operated and supported schools are girls	3.2b) 54.4%
3.2c) 2% of students in BRAC schools are children with disabilities	3.2c) 2.2%
4.1) 1.76 million climate vulnerable households have strengthened their resilience	4.1) 1.75 million
4.2) 60% of households are better prepared to mitigate disaster risk	4.2) 55%
People in the targeted communities have access to BRAC's health services:	5.1) 2.8 million
5.1) 2.5 million couples using modern contraceptives received from BRAC	5.2a) 24%
5.2a) 25% increase in TB case detection by 2020 relative to 2015	5.2b) 95%
5.2b) 90% of TB patients completing treatment	
6.1) 1 million people have improved access to critical urban services (e.g. water, health etc) (revised to 0.96 million)	6.1) 0.92 million
6.2) 20 municipalities engaging poor women in city planning	6.2) 20
7.1a) 135,000 additional people, including youth, employed in gainful and decent work	7.1a) 90,999
7.1b) 215,000 additional people aware of decent work practices	7.1b) 183,000
8.1) Incidences of violence against women and children prevented (no target)	8.1) 68,299
C1.1) 50% of people in supported communities wearing masks in public places	C1.1) Rural: 40% in crowded areas; 67% in markets/bazars; 4% in places of worship Urban: 40% in crowded areas; 55% in markets/bazar, 5% in places of worship
C1.2) 80% of households impacted by COVID-19 have increased their income by 25% through BRAC support	C1.2) Rural: 73%; Urban: 82%
9.1) 30% of programmes' expenditure financed through cost recovery (target revised to 20%)	9.1) 20%
9.2) 60% of project proposals are successful in getting funded	9.2) 61%
10.1) Graduation approach in 8 th 5-year plan	10.1) Not included
10.2) 60 visits from external stakeholders for lessons learning and partnerships	10.2) 54 visits
10.3) 2 signed MoUs between BRAC and external organisations	10.3) 8 MoUs

During the SPA II programme period, BRAC achieved or exceeded most of the outcome indicators, demonstrating delivery of development results at scale. Simultaneously, it progressed significantly with the organisational transformation process planned under SPA II.

BRAC has implemented a wide range of cost-effective interventions that have undergone high-quality evaluations. BRAC's flagship Ultra-Poor Graduation (UPG) model lifted 412,634 households from extreme poverty, with a success rate of 96%. It is rated as a "Good Buy" by FCDO¹ for cost effectiveness and is being replicated in 75 countries. BRAC's education programme delivered cost-effective education to over 4 million children from poorer households. Learning outcomes of BRAC primary students were on a par with Government school students in 2017². BRAC's health programme continued to deliver reliable family planning and tuberculosis services, in partnership with the Bangladesh Government. Through its new urban programme, BRAC contributed to improving the livelihoods of 920,000 urban poor in 20 cities. The organisation strengthened resilience of around 1.75 million climate vulnerable households living in remote geographic locations with extreme weather conditions.

BRAC introduced a new apprenticeship-based vocational training programme, which created job opportunities for 91,000 young people. The pandemic and successive lockdowns, however, had a major impact on BRAC's ability to deliver skills training programmes. In reducing violence against women and children, BRAC has successfully expanded gender transformative change interventions during SPA II. The Gender, Justice and Diversity (GJD) team and Safeguarding Unit played an important role in transforming the mindset of staff on gender equality. These two units were then supported by three programmes – Human Rights and Legal Aid Services (HRLS), the Community Empowerment Programme (CEP), and the Integrated Development Programme (IDP). With an integrated approach, BRAC's participants and communities together were able to prevent over 68,000 incidents³ of violence against women and children.

The SPA supported BRAC to become a financially sustainable organisation that can deliver greater impact by tackling a new generation of development challenges in Bangladesh. After five years BRAC is, in many ways, a transformed organisation and is well-placed to continue to play a vital role in Bangladesh's transition from Least Developed

¹ FCDO rates interventions as a "good buy" if it shows strong evidence of cost-effectiveness across many contexts. The original ultra-poor graduation model resulted in 37% increase in household incomes, with gains sustaining or increasing seven years later. The model has been replicated with positive results in many developing countries globally.

² National Student Assessment 2017, Government of Bangladesh

³ This is an estimate based on the likely numbers of incidents that would have occurred without a BRAC intervention.

Country status. The availability of unearmarked funding through SPA II was essential to achieving this transformation, allowing BRAC to innovate and adapt quickly to changing development priorities. The discontinuation of FCDO's unearmarked funding will affect the scale and breadth of BRAC's development and humanitarian work in the short term, but the survival of the organisation is not in doubt. It is too early to assess the extent to which the organisational changes will translate into increased development impact in the longer term.

As part of the financial sustainability goal of SPA II, BRAC started charging its clients fees for some services (e.g. education and health) with a log frame target of recovering 30% of its operational costs by 2020. With hindsight, this initiative was rolled out faster and on a larger scale than was ideal, without adequate experimentation at smaller scale to iron out implementation details, identify clients' willingness to pay, and assess the social impact. The 30% target was unrealistically ambitious over the SPA II period. Charging fees excludes the poorest from services, linked to skills development, health and nutrition, WASH and women's empowerment. BRAC's internal research highlighted the problems and accordingly it scaled back the roll out.

The log frame included five national-level impact indicators related to extreme poverty, malnutrition, adolescent fertility, and infant mortality. All five indicators improved over the programme period but fell short of the final target⁴. The log frame had six impact indicators at the programme level (i.e., impact on BRAC's beneficiaries and clients), of which four achieved the target.

Value for Money

The programme delivered high value for money, in line with the expectations outlined in the business case. This was achieved through:

1. A portfolio of proven, cost-effective interventions
2. Economies achieved through large-scale implementation and delivery through a single partner
3. Unearmarked funding allowing adaptation, reallocation based on need, and investment in BRAC's organisational development
4. BRAC's mission-driven approach to development based on experimentation and evidence

The programme developed a comprehensive VFM framework in 2019 for the largest interventions with technical assistance from then DFID, the reporting of which was enabled by BRAC's extensive monitoring data and evaluation results.

Economy: BRAC's community-based approach and frugal innovations helped minimise input costs. For example, BRAC's community-based health services were delivered through 50,000 volunteers. Most of its schools consist of a single room hut and it recruits local secondary school graduates as teachers. A new commercial strategy has enabled lower procurement costs through bulk purchases and framework agreements with suppliers. Delivering a programme of this scale and scope through a single partner resulted in very low transaction costs for DFID and then FCDO.

Efficiency: BRAC's scale of operations, combined with its frugal approach, delivered high levels of efficiency by minimising output costs. Unearmarked funding also incentivised efficiency. For example, BRAC reduced the cost of its UPG programme from \$550 to \$360 per household by moving from grants only to a mix of grants and loans. The Skills Training for Advancing Resources (STAR) apprenticeships substantially reduced the operating costs, whereas efficiency increased, mainly for two reasons. First of all, per staff learner allocation has been increased to 71% in 2020 due to implementing a digital platform for capturing operational activities since 2016. This resulted in operational efficiency from learners' acquisition of skills through to job placement phase. Secondly, in the traditional "Ostad-Sharged" (apprenticeship) model, the minimum capital expenditure is spent as a learner on the job with the minimum cost spent on training equipment. Alongside, SDP has invested in classroom-based training that has been introduced for more formal employment to the marginalized community, which will show Return on Investment (ROI) economically and socially. The use of mobile financial services and adoption of digital technologies are also helping to increase efficiency. BRAC's social enterprises and commercial investments subsidise its development programmes, which increased the efficiency of UK ODA. In 2019-20, 9% of BRAC's development programming was funded from its enterprises and investments. An additional 6% was generated through cost recovery⁵. BRAC expects its contribution to increase from 2021, in part to offset the end of FCDO funding.

Effectiveness: A number of BRAC's interventions have been found (through world class evaluations) to be highly cost-effective with long-term sustainable impact on the lives of the beneficiaries. The 2016 version of the UPG model increased household incomes by 21% with a benefit-cost ratio of 8.5⁶, which is higher than the ratio of 5.4 for the original, grant-only model⁷. The benefits to households that are lifted from extreme poverty have been found to

⁴ Based on 2019 data, so unaffected by COVID-19.

⁵ Fund utilisation audit report (2019-20) of BRAC SPA by SF Ahmed and Company

⁶ Rahman, A., Bhattacharjee, A., & Das, N. (2021). A good mix against ultra-poverty? Evidence from a Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) in Bangladesh. *Review of Development Economics*, 00, 1–32

⁷ ¹ Bandiera, Oriana et al. (2017) Labor markets and poverty in village economies. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 132 (2).

sustain (and even increase) a decade after support ended. The apprenticeship model increased the earnings of beneficiaries by 22% and hours worked by 34%, relative to those who did not receive the training⁸. The adolescent girls' club intervention is rated as High Potential by FCDO's Best Buys for Economic Development for its positive impact on empowering girls to seek paid work and resist early marriage⁹. BRAC's bridge and cohort education models were selected by Bangladesh's education ministry for the national initiative for out-of-school children. The unearmarked funding modality was particularly helpful in allowing BRAC to swiftly reprioritise funds to deliver assistance in response to floods and emergencies such as cyclone Amphan (in 2020) and COVID-19.

Equity: Equity is central to BRAC's work, with the economic and social empowerment of women and extremely poor people at the heart of its programmes. The ultra-poor graduation model supports the poorest households in the country and exclusively targets women.¹⁰ As stated above, the adolescent girls' clubs supported by BRAC have increased the social and economic empowerment of young women¹¹. The STAR apprenticeships have a stronger positive impact on women's employment than men's¹². The initiative to recover costs by charging fees for services, however, had a negative impact on equity and inclusion, especially for services such as education where free provision is the norm. Up to 90% of primary students were charged fees during the roll out. This caused negative reactions from their families as well as BRAC staff. These problems and risks were highlighted in BRAC's internal research¹³, and it modified its approach as a result.

Summarise the programme's [theory of change](#) and results framework, including any changes to outcome indicators.

The theory of change for the programme is based on empowering BRAC through the provision of unearmarked funding, knowledge, and technical assistance to identify and implement the most cost-effective development interventions in Bangladesh at scale, and to drive transformational change over the longer term. Alongside unearmarked programme funding, the UK (and Australia) would fund BRAC's organisational reform to create a stronger, financially more sustainable organisation, better at delivering development impact. The theory of change was based on the experience from the first SPA and a wealth of high-quality evidence on BRAC's development impact.

The theory of change remained broadly valid, as unearmarked funding allowed BRAC to harness its knowledge of Bangladesh's development problems, experience of delivering at scale, and a culture of using experimentation, innovation, and evidence to drive development results. Allowing this operational freedom to BRAC was crucial, given the changing nature and increasing complexity of Bangladesh's development problems, including a challenging political context. The funding flexibility allowed BRAC to iterate its interventions based on implementation feedback and research evidence. The funding also enabled BRAC to invest in organisational development, such as technology adoption and development of diversified higher-skilled staffing. There is strong empirical evidence that empowering implementers to use their judgement is substantially more effective than top-down management in terms of increasing development effectiveness in complex environments¹⁴. This has been a hallmark of DFID's (and now FCDO's) programming globally and the SPA is an example of how to do this well and of what can be achieved through a sustained partnership.

However not all the assumptions have held true. The positive impact of BRAC's development programmes for the people it serves has not translated into the expected improvements in several national-level development indicators (e.g. extreme poverty, malnutrition, and adolescent fertility). This is partly due to the gains from economic development not reaching the poorest as much as they did previously. Bangladesh's development progress has significantly slowed down over the past decade across many headline indicators. In many ways, the easy gains have been made, and those who remain extremely poor are harder to reach and require support across multiple dimensions to sustainably exit poverty. Further gains will require substantial increases in the quality, governance, scale, and scope of public services. In addition, addressing the current development challenges will also require a stronger collaborative partnership between the Government, NGOs, and the private sector. While BRAC continued its collaboration with the Government on service delivery (e.g. health services and disaster response), this did not grow into a deeper and formal knowledge partnership. BRAC's took a more strategic approach on its policy engagement with the Government during the latter half of the programme. It engaged both formally and informally

⁸ Das, N. (2020). Training the disadvantaged youth and labor market outcomes: Evidence from Bangladesh. *Journal of Development Economics*

⁹ Bandiera, Oriana, et al. 2020. "Women's Empowerment in Action: Evidence from a Randomized Control Trial in Africa." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*

¹⁰ Households that do not have any adult active women are excluded from the programme

¹¹ Bandiera, O. et al (2020). Women's empowerment in action: evidence from a randomized control trial in Africa. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 12(1)

¹² Das, N. (2020). Training the disadvantaged youth and labor market outcomes: Evidence from Bangladesh. *Journal of Development Economics*

¹³ Nath, Samir Ranjan. 2017. Students' achievement of competencies at transitional period: A study on BRAC primary schools. BRAC Research Monograph Series No 75

¹⁴ Honig, D. (2018) *Navigation by Judgment: Why and When Top Down Management of Foreign Aid Doesn't Work*. Oxford University Press.

with senior Government officials on a range of policy issues. BRAC partnered with the Government on the COVID-19 response and vaccination campaign, and for the Rohingya response. Joint advocacy by BRAC, FCDO and DFAT (Australia) with the Bangladesh Government was limited. FCDO did not use its diplomatic and development influence adequately to bring together the Government and NGOs to make better use of the knowledge and insights from BRAC's work to drive national action on development.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has pushed 24.5 million additional people into poverty¹⁵. The pandemic is also likely to have long-term social and economic impacts, such as on infant nutrition, education, child marriage, and child labour; and further slowdown or reverse Bangladesh's development progress. The results framework, which captures 100% of BRAC's results, was revised in 2020 (adding new indicators in the COVID-19 context). FCDO adjusted its attributed share of results from 43% to 38%.

C: Detailed Output Assessment

Output Number and Title	1. Increased provision of quality health, education/skills, and financial services		
Output Score	A		
Impact weighting (%)	20%	Impact weighting revised since last AR?	N

Output Indicator	Starting Target (RF 2017)	Final Logframe Target (RF Oct'20)	Final Result Achieved	Indicator Score
Indicator 1.1 # of people provided with sustainable access to limited drinking water from improved source.	99,902	128,902	339,435	263% A++
Indicator 1.2 # of people provided with sustainable access to sanitation	567,820	569,206	748,912	131% A+
Indicator 1.3A: # of services received by people from BRAC services providers (services include reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health, nutrition, non-communicable diseases, disability and eye care quality services)	39,297,757 (RF 2019)	31,772,002	39,080,735	123% A+
Indicator 1.3B: # of women and adolescent girls receiving a package of nutrition intervention and additional nutritional support.	17,483,886	15,633,651	17,659,785	113% A
Indicator 1.4A # of teachers trained (foundational training)	67,711	40,154	49,931	124% A+
Indicator 1.4B # of teachers received monthly refreshers training	49,406 (RF 2019)	40,154	49,931	124% A+
Indicator 1.5 # of students graduated from BRAC operated schools (including NGO partner schools)	3,567,497	2,676,048	2,817,623	105% A
Indicator 1.6 # of children enrolled in BRAC operated schools (including NGO partner schools)	5,023,610	4,000,000	4,054,745	101% A
Indicator 1.7 # of beneficiaries in Adolescent Development Programme (ADP) and Gonokendro in BRAC Education Programme (BEP)	1,591,300 (non cumulative)	1,591,300 (non cumulative)	1,723,347	108% A
Indicator 1.8A (rephrased): # of non-Government secondary schools (PACE) supported	1,770	1,770	1,770	100% A
Indicator 1.8B: # of students graduated from BRAC supported schools	224,000 (RF 2019)	224,000	239,951	107% A
Indicator 1.8C: # of students enrolled in BRAC supported schools	1,000,000 (RF 2019)	1,000,000	1,009,882	101% A
Indicator 1.8D: Average of attendance rate of the students in BRAC supported schools	70% (RF 2019)	70%	69.85%	100% A
Indicator 1.8E: Average retention rate of BRAC supported schools	64% (RF 2019)	64%	66.34%	103% A

¹⁵ PPRC-BIGD Rapid Research Phase III (April 2021)

Indicator 1.9.A: # of youth received training	336,395 (RF 2017) 100,431 (RF 2019)	95,328	83,883	88% B
Indicator 1.9.B: # of youth placed in jobs	78,750 (RF 2019)	71,108	60,114	84.53% B
Indicator 1.9.C: # of people receiving Employability and Entrepreneurship training	55,217 (RF 2019)	47,357	58,899	124% A+
Indicator 1.9. D: # of people provided knowledge related to decent work/employment	194,089 (RF 2019)	181,362	190,218	105% A
Indicator 1.10 # of additional poor women and men able to access social transfers (such as cash or in-kind transfers including food)	450,000 (RF 2019)	656,637	696,160	106% A

Overall score against this **Output is A**. Of 19 indicators drawn from six programmes, BRAC has met or exceeded expectations on 17, falling short on just two. Below is the programme-wise highlights of the results:

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)

BRAC's WASH programme ensured sustainable access to drinking water from improved sources for 339,435 people. The programme also provided access to improved sanitation for 748,912 people. The programme adopted the innovative approach of developing water entrepreneurs, and providing them with technical and financial support. To reach the poorest, the programme provided grants to install or upgrade facilities, reducing the financial stress of investing in infrastructure. The programme also installed 273 Reverse Osmosis (RO) plants to purify water in the climate vulnerable coastal and *haor* areas.

Lessons/Recommendations

1. The RO model is working well as a means of providing quick, safe access to drinking water, but BRAC needs to identify a the technology/solution that can be scaled up in specific regions. BRAC should consider joint programming with institutions, civil society organisations, technological research bodies, and community entrepreneurs to address the scale issue.
2. Self-financing safely managed water and sanitation infrastructure at the household level with the upper poor and non-poor¹⁶ is working well. Learning from this can be captured to inform the evolving WASH social enterprise of BRAC, particularly finding out the balance between reaching grant support for the poorest and cost recovery from other clients.

Health Nutrition and Population Programme (HNPP)

The health services provided by HNPP include reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child, and adolescent health, nutrition, non-communicable diseases and eye-care. HNPP was particular to ensure services for the PwDs. The programme provided more than 39 million instances of healthcare services, mainly in rural areas. HNPP reached 2,762,452 eligible couples with modern contraceptive methods. The programme successfully followed an inclusive approach, providing affordable services for the poor. The cost of healthcare services through the programme was around 25-30% less than other providers. The programme also successfully adopted the use of phone and ICT tools in providing low or no-touch maternal, childcare, and nutrition services during the pandemic. BRAC also leveraged its long-standing health partnership with Government to continue essential services at scale during the pandemic.

Value for Money

The introduction of digital technology has brought effectiveness and efficiency in service delivery. The cost per beneficiary was reduced from BDT 119 (£1) in 2016 to BDT 62 (53 pence) in 2020. Combining community-based and centre-based approaches ensured equity by delivering essential health and nutrition services to persons with disabilities, vulnerable women, and people living below the poverty line. Several studies¹⁷ suggest that home visits by HNPP's community-based health workers can help to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality, indicating that the programme has been effective¹⁸.

Lessons/ Recommendations

¹⁶ The upper poor are the people who are over the lower poverty line (extreme poverty), but still below the national poverty line considering their income and expenditure to buy a basic food basket. The non-poor are those who are above the poverty line.

¹⁷ Chakrabarty, 2002; Lawn, 2005; NIPORT, 2003; McPherson, 2006

¹⁸ Study by the James P Grant school found the benefit-cost ratio of BRAC maternal and neo-natal child health initiative under HNPP to be 254.

Digitising the system is contributing to data-driven decision making. As the structure evolves, BRAC should consider investing in fully digital health programmes, to allow a more analytical/need-based approach.

1. Evidence¹¹ suggests that NGO-driven community health interventions are effective, manageable and scalable. BRAC should explore an enduring, collaborative model with Government.

BRAC Education Programme (BEP)

Despite the ongoing challenges of the pandemic, BEP was able to graduate 2,817,623 (54% female) students from BRAC operated schools while achieving a higher pass rate (99.15%, compared to the national average of 96.96%) for the Primary Education Completion Examination. The programme also invested in building the capacity and skills of teachers (49,931 trained) by providing foundation and refresher training. The training of teachers module, has been recognised as a promising practice and the Bureau of Non-formal Education (BNFE) is collaborating with BEP to provide training to 2,000 teachers in 2021. The programme has successfully introduced group-based online classes using button-phones. For this, the programme-trained teachers, tested the method, and then scaled it up. Importantly, BEP facilitated activities to safeguard children by ensuring their mental wellbeing while motivating them to learn from home.

Value for Money

BEP's cost-recovery target was revised considering the impact of COVID-19 on children and their families. This ensured greater equity and inclusion of children from poorer households. The programme's overall cost per child reduced from BDT 3,406 (£29) in 2016 to BDT 2,751 (£23.46) in 2020, while maintaining a retention rate of 98.87%. Throughout the programme the average pass rate of students for PEPCE exam was 99.15% (national average for 2019 was 96.69%) which is a clear indication of the programme's effectiveness

Lessons/recommendations

1. The Government of Bangladesh has accepted BEP's Social Emotional Learning and 2-year Pre-primary curriculum. BRAC should prioritise this as an advocacy agenda with the National Curriculum and Textbook Board to mainstream the curriculum.
2. The technology-driven teaching-learning process promoted during the pandemic poses various challenges related to the cost of equipment and connectivity, data credibility, effective coordination for quality assurance, and equitable access. BRAC should review this to make sure it does not further exacerbate the digital divide that the poor and marginalised already face.
3. The need for BRAC's education services varies across the country. BRAC should identify geographic locations/regions (e.g. remote *chars*, *haors*, coastal belts, hill tracts) where there are the most significant gaps in quality education services and develop a more targeted approach.

Skills Development Programme (SDP)

The SDP struggled in the first three years of implementation as the cost recovery assumptions did not hold true. The programme operated in a context where other donor-funded and Government skills training projects paid stipends to their participants, where BRAC did not. In 2018, the Results Framework targets for SDP were revised to focus on job placement and knowledge on decent work in addition to skills training. The programme achieved or exceeded some targets, but fell short on others. SDP could not implement activities as planned in 2020 due to shutdowns imposed by the Government to curb the pandemic. However, SDP later resumed its operation with an adapted approach, allowing existing participants to graduate and new learners to enrol online.

Value for Money

In terms of equity, SDP ensured that 8.9% of the learners in the training programmes were Persons with Disability (PWD) in 2020. The percentage of the female learners enrolled increased from 43.16% (2016) to 73.56% (2020).

Lessons/ Recommendations

1. Although SDP has been able to increase the number of female learners significantly, their dropout rate is still high due to the weak and inconvenient work environment for women in the private sector. The other reason for dropout is social stigmatisation related to women's mobility.. BRAC should consider these aspects in the design of future skills programmes.
2. There remains a gap between the skills required by the formal sector in Bangladesh and what skills development programmes are offering. BRAC should consider working more closely with the private sector to understand changing demands for skills and tailor programmes accordingly. There is an inconsistency in development partners' approaches to funding skills programmes. Many programmes continue to provide stipends to participants, whereas BRAC was asked to develop a self-sustainable fee-based model. A more consistent development partner (DP) approach, brokered through the Local Consultative Group, could be key to making skills programmes more effective.

Ultra-Poor Graduation Model (UPG)

BRAC's UPG model was revamped at the beginning of SPA II to acknowledge that extremely poor people are not homogenous, and that their needs are context specific. BRAC redesigned the targeting, intervention modality and packages, graduation criteria, management structure and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework; with the most visible change being the introduction of loans, in addition to grants. The programme has expanded to urban areas and to the host communities in the humanitarian context of Cox's Bazar, and has been piloting a model to graduate PwDs from poverty, working with Humanity and Inclusion (HI) International.

UPG ensured an additional 410,043 poor women and men were able to access social transfers, such as cash or in-kind transfers including food, and 96% of the enrolled households graduated out of extreme poverty.

Value for Money

Despite the ongoing pandemic, 97% of participants of the 2019 cohort remained above the extreme poverty threshold. It is a demonstration of the programme's effectiveness in increasing the coping mechanisms of the ultra-poor in the face of income shocks. The benefit-cost-ratio (BCR) on the revamped model also reflects the increased cost-effectiveness of the programme. During the early stages of SPA II, the UPG programme was redesigned to match Bangladesh's changing context which led to initial higher levels of self-exclusion¹⁹ by the selected beneficiaries. However, this was reduced to 10% (of 2019 cohort) as the new model matured. This suggests that the programme continues to remain cost-effective (section B's overall VFM assessment has already cited the BCR comparison of the new and old models).

Lessons/Recommendations

- BRAC is contributing to a Multi-Donor Trust Fund with the World Bank for the Partnership for Economic Inclusion. This has been formed to accelerate eradication of extreme poverty in partnership with Governments around the world. The inclusion of an NGO in a Multi-Donor Fund led by World Bank is happening for the first time, and is due to BRAC's global reputation. BRAC can use this to further strengthen the UPG model and promote its global replicability.
- Bangladesh is experiencing the emergence of millions of 'new poor' due to COVID-19. BRAC should consider further adapting UPG to offer a package of interventions for the newly emerged poor so that they can exit poverty again as quickly as possible.

^[1] BRAC Health, Nutrition and Population Programme (HNPP): Impact Evaluation and Social Return on Investment of Selected Programmes

Output Title	2. Increased community awareness and promotion of women's rights and promoting empowerment of women and girls			
Output Score:	A+			
Impact weighting (%):	10%	Impact Weighting revised since last AR?	N	
Output Indicator	Starting Target (RF 2017)	Final Logframe Target (RF Oct'20)	Final Result Achieved	Indicator Score
Indicator 2.1 # of school management committees and women-led community organisations with women represented in the majority	74,590	48,500	83,415	172% A++
Indicator 2.2 # of women survivors of violence receiving services such as counselling, medical treatment, referral linkages for rehabilitation and reintegration, Alternative Dispute Arbitration (ADR) and case support in court	26,775	74,349	103,276	139% A+
Indicator 2.3 # of people reached through awareness efforts on violence against women/children, and prevention of child marriage	7.14 mil	7.2mil	7,884,316	109% A

Overall score against this output is A+. BRAC has met or exceeded expectations against all three indicators.

Gender, Justice and Diversity (GJD)

With FCDO's SPA II contribution, GJD reached 5.38 million people to raise awareness on stopping violence against women and girls. The programme mainstreamed gender in 14 programmes and enterprises across BRAC and supported six programmes to develop the capacity of volunteers in promoting Gender Equality and Women's

¹⁹ In the beginning of SPA II, many of the poorer households were in fear that they might not be able to repay the loan and excluded themselves from the programme. Without understanding the flexible nature of the offer, BRAC's offer through UPG was different than traditional micro-credit loans.

Empowerment (GEWE). GJD also worked with BRAC's Human Resource Division (HRD) to increase the number of female staff at leadership level, empower women, and ensure a gender-responsive work environment. It supported BRAC's senior management team to set an objective in its Annual Operating Plan to mainstream GEWE at all levels throughout the organisation. Although GJD faced challenges due to the COVID-19 restrictions, it still managed to disseminate gender awareness messages among 2,023,081 programme participants through different community-based forums/platforms in 2020.

Value for Money

The gender mainstreaming work of GJD ensured equity in every aspect of the VFM results chain. GJD's gender mainstreaming training costs per trainee reduced from BDT 4,108 (£35) in 2019 to BDT 2,583 (£22) in 2020.

Lessons/Recommendations:

1. Mainstreaming gender equality, women's empowerment and diversity is an ongoing process and needs longer-term commitment from higher management. The commitment in BRAC's draft strategy for 2021-2025 to address patriarchy, as the underlying cause, is both brave and commendable, but will require a significant investment of staff and financial resources.
2. Learning from GJD suggests that both the need for women to access services and addressing the power imbalance between women and men are essential, but the second brings more transformational results. BRAC may use this learning in programming to ensure that projects invest in both.

Community Empowerment Programme (CEP)

Through community-based platforms such as *Polli Samaj* and popular theatre, CEP provided support to 43,988 survivors of violence against women and girls. The activities of CEP include awareness raising at community level, providing medical and psycho-social support to survivors, connecting them with the Human Rights and Legal Aid Service (HRLS) programme and managing the data base of survivors. With CEP support, 5,550 women leaders received Joyeta awards²⁰ for their role in the community and many of them are active members of different committees of local government and other local institutions. CEP's analysis of increase of violence against women and girls contributed to the policy discussion on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the lives of rural women. The Dhaka based *Monobondhu* network of CEP, which provides psychosocial support to victims of trauma and stress, partnered with the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (MoWCA) to train 24 psychosocial first aid providers during the pandemic.

Lessons/Recommendations

1. Applying cost recovery to interventions such as *Polli Samaj* and popular theatre, designed to promote awareness of rights, is challenging. BRAC should consider undertaking a thorough analysis to inform future strategies.
2. The use of digital technology and virtual platforms is an opportunity to save costs, but technologies are not gender or class neutral. In addition to limited knowledge about technologies, extremely poor, PwDs and women often struggle to access technologies, such as, the internet and smartphones. Even women from non-poor households cannot access technologies as they do not own the required digital devices. BRAC should reflect on the experiences of the use of technology during the pandemic and share its experiences, to avoid exaggerating the digital divide in relation to gender, poverty and social marginalisation.

Human Rights and Legal Aid Services (HRLS)

As the formal legal system in Bangladesh is overburdened with cases and complex procedures, domestic abuse and gender violence cases are re-directed to the informal legal aid and community empowerment mechanisms. HRLS has contributed to develop processes to use Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) as an effective platform to resolve cases efficiently, ensuring the rights and dignity of women and girls. The role of HRLS became more prominent over the last year as incidences of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) have risen sharply during the pandemic. HRLS provided support, including psycho-social counselling, medical treatment, and referral linkages for rehabilitation and reintegration, to 59,288 women during SPA II.

Value for Money

HRLS was able to retrieve almost BDT2 billion [£17.11 million] for its programme participants for dowry, maintenance and inheritance rights through ADR and court cases. This was achieved at a cost-effective average rate of 1.51; i.e. for every Taka spent on the programme, Taka 1.51 was recovered for its beneficiary.

Lessons/recommendations

1. There is a need for evidence-based advocacy focusing on the high rate of violence and the low rate of actions against perpetrators. Connecting community-based platforms and partnering with national-level networks, BRAC can systematically provide information on trends. The rise of VAWG during the pandemic and how BRAC has quickly analysed data from its community-based platforms is a good example of this.

²⁰ Every year, Government recognises the contributions of women to their communities through this award throughout the country.

2. BRAC has further enhanced its position on engaging men and boys in promoting women's empowerment. This can be documented and shared with wider audiences.

Output Number and Title	3. Increased support for resilience and livelihood security, including effects of climate change			
Output Score:	A+			
Impact weighting (%):	15%	Impact Weighting revised since last AR?	N	
Output Indicator	Starting Target (RF 2017)	Final Logframe Target (RF Oct'20)	Final Result Achieved	Indicator Score
Indicator 3.1 # of people receiving support to better cope with the effects of climate change	1,298,887	2,167,244	2,730,386	125% A+
Indicator 3.2 # of vulnerable household supported with disaster risk reduction and preparedness interventions	150,000 (RF 2019)	127,500	130,051	102% A
Indicator 3.3 # of BRAC staff and other stakeholders trained on disaster management	7,500 (RF 2019)	5,000	8,432	168% A++

This Output scored A+. BRAC has met or exceeded expectations against all three indicators.

Climate Change Programme (CCP)

CCP interventions helped 2,730,386 in vulnerable areas to develop improved coping mechanisms., For example, the programme ensured water supply to vulnerable coastal communities in Satkhira and Bagerhat by introducing rain water harvesting, reverse osmosis, and the sustainable use of surface water (ponds). CCP also developed 30 cyclone resilient house-cum-mini-cyclone centres, generating interest from policy makers for wider replication. PWDs were prioritised during the selection of target beneficiaries and the design of all infrastructure. CCP has contributed to the development of a climate change adaptation model for BRAC as an organisation by developing a policy document, 'Mainstreaming Climate Change at BRAC', and the 'Climate Resilience Framework of BRAC' to strengthen programme level interventions to build resilience amongst communities.

Lessons/ Recommendations

1. CCP conducted a detailed assessment on carbon footprint and an energy audit in 2019 for BRAC Centres. This is part of BRAC's aspiration to become carbon neutral. As a follow up, BRAC can continue investing in cutting its carbon footprint to become a more energy efficient organisation, and share lessons on progress towards carbon neutrality with other organisations.
2. BRAC should looked for opportunities to scale up the innovative climate resilient housing-cum-mini-cyclone shelters, which can accommodate 35 to 50 individuals and their livestock during cyclones, with Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) and Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR).

BRAC Humanitarian Programme (BHP)

BHP directly contributed to developing BRAC's standard operating procedures (SOPs) for disaster relief, cyclone contingency plans, flood response guidelines and other tools. It built staff capacity on SOPs and on responding effectively and efficiently during natural disasters. During cyclone Amphan, BHP reached 10,000 households, 6,000 of which were given immediate support, and 4,000 of which received early recovery support. During the 2020 floods, BHP provided immediate response to 50,000 households, and recovery support to 12,500 families on food security (agricultural input), livelihoods (cash for work, cash for livelihood inputs) and WASH. In 2017, when the latest Rohingya refugee influx took place, BRAC significantly expanded its BHP by partnering with refugees and host communities in Cox's Bazar to deliver services. At present, BRAC is the largest NGO responder to the crisis and has delivered lifesaving assistance, supported livelihoods recovery, and helped to rebuild the lives of both Rohingya refugees and the host communities

Lessons/ Recommendations

1. BHP has the capacity to respond to any disaster within 24-72 hours, anywhere in the country. BHP is also working to integrate a Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) component to all programmes so that risks are minimised. This is in the early stages and BRAC needs to continue its commitment to mainstream this within the organisation in order to be better prepared.

Urban Development Programme (UDP)

BRAC began its UDP in 2016, and is now working in 400 slums throughout the country. UDP reached a total of 920,000 people through SPA II supported activities, which include providing livelihoods support, skills development,

housing and infrastructure improvement, improvement of WASH facilities, access to improved health services, and resilience to climate change. These activities were implemented through close collaboration with city corporations and communities.

Lessons/ Recommendations

1. UDP's previous experience in handling emergencies such as slum fires and evictions helped in managing BRAC's COVID-19 response in urban areas. However, a proportion of the livelihoods and enterprise development support to beneficiaries was spent to meet basic food needs due to sudden economic hardship. This could have been mitigated with better coordination with community-level activities carried out by other organisations in any given location.

Output Number and Title	C.1 Increased support to individuals to better understand COVID-19 preventative measures and deal with the effects of COVID-19, including access to essentials services and new services responding to COVID-19			
Output Score:	A+			
Impact weighting (%):	5%	Impact Weighting revised since last AR?	N	
Output Indicator	Starting Target (RF 2017)	Final Logframe Target (RF Oct'20)	Final Result Achieved	Indicator Score
C.1.1 Number of people reached with COVID-19 prevention and protection information through BRAC support	-	75.00mil	78.16mil	104% A
C.1.2 Number of people who received protective products from BRAC for COVID-19 prevention and protection	-	1,188,545	1,916,259	161% A++
C.1.3 Number of community members tested for COVID-19 by BRAC and who have received their lab test results	-	264,960	257,399	97% B
C.1.4 Number of individuals with COVID-19 symptoms who received food support from BRAC to maintain 14 days' isolation and quarantine	-	36,000	32,543	90.4% B
C.1.5 Number of calls responded/ served through the COVID-19 tele-medicine help lines supported by BRAC	-	32,530	101,852	313% A++
C.1.6 Number of students who continued their education through distance learning platforms developed or supported by BRAC	-	183,575	233,331	127% A+
C.1.7 Number of people who lost employment or income, supported to have better access to income through BRAC's livelihood/IGA/microfinance interventions	-	590,781	2,184,495	370% A++
C.1.8 Number of returnee migrants without employment or income, received social reintegration supports through BRAC	-	500	10,422	2084% A++

This Output scored A+. Of the eight indicators, BRAC significantly exceeded four, moderately exceeded one, met one, and moderately did not meet two.

During the initial stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, BRAC quickly developed a plan to respond in consultation with SPA II partners. Within just a few weeks, BRAC programmes communicated COVID-19 prevention and protection information to 78.16 million poor and vulnerable people and distributed hygiene kits and protective products to 1.9 million. As livelihood impacts became more apparent, BRAC provided support to 2,184,495 people. Reaching 233,331 children to continue education through a distance learning programme was also very effective. The organisation developed eight advocacy tools and conducted rapid assessments and studies to assess the impact of COVID-19 on the economy and wellbeing of poor and marginalised communities.

The Government of Bangladesh granted BRAC permission to select participants and distribute cash support during the initial country-wide lockdowns. It later incorporated the BRAC COVID testing into the national system, with test results communicated directly via text messages from the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) portal. BRAC's pivotal role in Bangladesh's early COVID response should not be underestimated, and was only possible because of the unique position BRAC holds and its ability to work as a trusted partner alongside Government, other NGOs, and bilateral and multilateral development partners.

Lessons/ Recommendations

1. The draft BRAC Bangladesh Strategy (2021-2025) has been greatly influenced by the impacts of COVID-19 on Bangladesh's economy, marginalised communities, and most affected sectors. The strategy suggests a two-

phase approach: Phase 1 - Economic Recovery Strategy for 2021-2022 with no cost recovery in place; and Phase 2 - Revival and accelerated inclusive growth for 2023-2025. Once finalised, we would encourage BRAC to share the strategy widely to promote greater collaboration between BRAC, development partners, and the Government of Bangladesh.

- BRAC should document its learning from its COVID-19 responses, especially the flexibility offered by the SPA II partnership. This can inform future collaboration between BRAC and development partners in responding to any future crisis such as a pandemic and other disasters.

Output Number and Title	4. Systems in place to support transformation from "operational excellence" to a predominantly "knowledge organisation"			
Output Score	A			
Impact weighting (%):	5%	Impact Weighting revised since last AR?	N	
Output Indicator	Starting Target (RF 2017)	Final Logframe Target (RF Oct'20)	Final Result Achieved	Indicator Score
4.1 Number of BRAC's programme using real-time data (including pilots) to make adjustments and re-adjustments on a monthly basis, at a minimum	15	10	13	130% A+
4.2 Percentage of action plans for M&E system strengthening completed on time		89%	82%	87% B

This output scored A. Of the two indicators, BRAC exceeded one and moderately did not meet one.

Over the last five years, BRAC has undergone a digital transformation. Almost all operations, from field-level to head office, are now executed through a carefully designed information technology architecture. For example, BRAC's community health workers now input client and patient data directly into handheld digital devices, which is immediately uploaded to cloud servers. BRAC now has a vast array of operational and client data, which it can use to improve its services and increase its impact on people and communities. The use of this data in this way is still at a nascent stage, although a partnership with [Microsoft](#) to use artificial intelligence for health shows its enormous potential. FCDO provided £60,000 to BRAC to support a review of its data protection policies and practices so that it meets the requisite standards.

The progress on digitalisation is more remarkable because, until 2015, BRAC's field operations used entirely paper-based systems. Following its decision, in 2016, to digitalise, BRAC undertook the challenging task of designing and rolling out a unified IT system for all its operations nationwide. The COVID-19 pandemic also provided a positive push to technology adoption. This effort meant that BRAC could move to fully virtual operations within 48 hours of a national lockdown in March 2020.

BRAC collaborates with world leading institutions to undertake research and evaluation of its work and it is reputed for its evidence-based approach. Its internal Research and Evidence Division was moved out of the organisation and rehoused in BRAC University. This has increased the quality and independence of research, but the loss of in-house expertise hampers internal experimentation and learning. BRAC's internal monitoring system has also undergone substantial changes during the SPA II period.

Value for money

The investment in digital systems has increased BRAC's efficiency by allowing it to reduce costs. For example, it now uses digital systems to train its staff, disburse loans and use frequently updated data to make better management decisions. It is starting to use digital systems to improve its services so that it can increase its cost effectiveness by delivering greater development impact.

Lessons/Recommendations

- The digitalisation process was competently executed because BRAC recruited experienced personnel and partnered with leading technology organisations. It undertook extensive internal consultations to build systems that all staff would actively use and improve productivity.
- Close collaboration with BRAC University is affected by budget and contracting difficulties. The two organisations are legally separate entities with separate budgets, which can act as barrier to collaboration. BRAC could consider having an agreement with BRAC University that enables collaboration on learning.
- Stakeholder interviews suggested that BRAC needs to re-establish learning and experimentation at the heart of its work. This includes building staff capability to use data analysis and insights from field staff to design and improve the next generation of interventions. The role of monitoring for learning and improvement should also be clarified and strengthened.

Output Title	5. Improved business processes and strengthened programme support (back office) units			
Output Score	A			
Impact weighting (%)	5%	Weighting revised since last AR?		N
Output Indicator	Starting Target	Final Logframe Target	Final Result Achieved	Indicator Score
5.1 Number of programmes initiating cost-recovery and enterprise pilots		7 by 2020	7	Met expectations: A 89%
5.2 Number of Modules of Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) rolled out and being used by 95% of target users	5 modules of ERP rolled out and 95% of target users using the modules (RF 2019)	8 modules of ERP rolled out and 95% of target users using the modules	Completed: 5 modules In-Progress: 5 modules Completed: HRMS, PMS, Procurement (Phase 1), eTender (Phase 1) and MF modules have been 100% rolled out as per target.	
5.3 Number of Programmes (proposals) developed with in-depth project management and technical support from PRL	9	9	12	133% A+

This output 5 scores A. Of the three indicators, one achieved expectations, one exceeded expectations, and one moderately did not meet expectations.

Output 5 captures BRAC's initiative and allocation of resources to improve and automate business processes, and strengthening in-house capacity. BRAC made good progress in shifting mindsets away from free services towards a fee-based model for some services. Seven programmes (BEP, HNPP, WASH, SDP, HRLS, Migration and CEP) have been implementing pilots. The results show a gradual growth of cost recovery from around 18% in 2016 to 28% in 2019. This fell to 15% in 2020, as participants were unable to pay for services due to the economic impacts of COVID-19.

The Enterprise Resource Planning system went live in 2019. Against a target of eight ERP modules rolled out, BRAC implemented five²¹. A further five modules are in the process of being implemented.

Established in late 2018 following the SPA II Mid-Term Review, BRAC's Programme Development, Resource Mobilisation and Learning (PRL) team was mandated to support financial sustainability, track organisational transformation, and capture lessons learned. PRL led proposal development and fund mobilisation for all BRAC programmes, bringing in a total of £126 million in 2019 and £109 million in 2020. Of this, £22.65 million was for BRAC's COVID-19 response in 2020. PRL also provided leadership for strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems, which tie in with the learning component for BRAC. PRL also provides the focal point within BRAC for the co-ordination of SPA activities, including working groups and steering committees.

Value for Money

The cost-recovery initiative undertaken as part of SPA II gave rise to equity concerns because of the risk of excluding the poor and vulnerable poor from essential services. The initiative was rolled out very quickly in some programmes, without fully considering demographic factors and the willingness and ability of clients to pay. For services such as preventative healthcare, charging a small fee can cause a sharp reduction in use and lead to negative social impacts. Fees for schooling excludes children from poor families, many of whom have previously dropped out of government

²¹ Human Resource Management System (HRMS), Performance Management System (PMS), Procurement (phase 1), e-tender (phase 1) and Microfinance,

schools. However, there is greater willingness to pay for diagnostic services such as blood pressure and glucose measurement.

The time for completion of tenders has reduced by 40% with the introduction of new processes. Reduced queries, disputes, and appeals from the suppliers are the other signs of increased effectiveness. With an efficient ERP system, BRAC was able to procure around BDT 283 million (£2.4 million) worth of supplies in 2020 from 362 different vendors with an average lead time of 4.38 days for COVID management goods procurement. BPD also revised the BRAC Procurement Guideline and Implementation Procedure (BPGIP) in February 2021.

Lessons/Recommendations

1. The roll out of ERP has started but will require more time to complete considering the size of BRAC and some resistance to change, mainly from field-level officers. As ERP has demonstrated the value of digitising and systematising processes, resources should be allocated to ERP to continue roll out and socialisation of the process amongst staff.

Output Number and Title	6. Development and execution of effective approach to building leadership and management capacity			
Output Score	A			
Impact weighting (%):	5%	Impact weighting revised since last AR?	N	
Output Indicator	Starting Target	Final Logframe Target	Final Result Achieved	Indicator score
6.1 System is in place for building leadership and management capacity	Leadership Academy established and fully functional	Leadership Academy established and fully functional	Leadership Academy established and fully functional	100% A
6.2 Number of people graduated from the leadership academy	Built 20 strong pipeline of leaders who can lead BRAC in the future	Built strong pipeline of leaders who can lead BRAC in the future	Both groups of transformational (19) and emerging (30) leaders have completed their leadership journey	100% A

This output scored A. BRAC met both indicators.

BRAC's leadership has undergone a major transition over the past five years. It has appointed several new directors, reflecting a greater diversity of backgrounds, age, experience, and nationality than before. More than 40% of the new senior leadership team members (director and above) are female. There has also been a significant amount of churn in BRAC's middle management. These changes have resulted in some loss of programme experience and institutional memory. Senior leaders expect that some staff who have gone abroad will return to BRAC with greater international experience. There are fewer women in mid-level positions relative to senior leadership positions. BRAC is working to increase this by mentoring and training women to empower and encourage them to take up more senior positions. The Leadership Academy allows BRAC to identify potential future leaders and invest in their development.

Value for money

Management capabilities of NGOs are critical for their ability to deliver impact. Unearmarked funding that enables organisations to invest in developing their capabilities is the most effective way to support NGOs to increase their effectiveness. BRAC's investment in leadership and management capacity has played a very important role in delivering impact through SPA II. It will also enable BRAC to continue delivering high impact development programmes into the future.

Learning/Recommendations

1. BRAC's brand now enables it to attract talented young graduates and early career professionals, many of whom would not have previously considered working in the development sector. This has been an important achievement, especially given the scarcity of highly skilled graduates in Bangladesh. The new generation brings skills relevant for BRAC's transition and future ambition.
2. BRAC needs to ensure that it harnesses the diversity of the skills and experiences that its staff brings (field implementation, strategy, communications and digital). The challenge is to instil BRAC's ethos among the new recruits, train them on development programming, and help them fit within a changing organisation. The field immersion programme helps young professionals to understand the needs of the marginalised populations.

Output Number and Title	7. Increased organisational knowledge and capacity on safeguarding issues at BRAC			
Output Score	A			

Impact weighting (%):	5%	Impact weighting revised since last AR?	N	
Output Indicator	<i>Starting Target (RF 2018)</i>	Final Logframe Target (RF Oct'20)	Final Result Achieved	Indicator Score
7.1 Percentage of BRAC safeguarding action plan completed on time	-	87%	87%	Met expectations: A

This output scored A. BRAC fully met the single indicator.

This output was added during the revision of the results framework in 2019. Then DFID contracted Keeping Children Safe (KCS)²² to support BRAC's efforts, and dedicated the time of a senior Social development Adviser to working with BRAC over a period of six months. This support resulted in the formation of BRAC's Safeguarding Unit, and the development and implementation of BRAC's 2019-2021 Safeguarding Action Plan (consisting of 58 action items). BRAC has significantly strengthened safeguarding activities at organisational, programmatic, employee, programme participant, and partner levels.

Safeguarding components were included in BRAC's central risk assessment framework and became an integral part of the due diligence assessment tools. This was done in collaboration with Risk Management Services (RMS) unit and PRL. This was followed by inclusion of safeguarding objectives within employee Performance Management System for senior managers and above. BRAC continues to work on the completion of the action plan adapting to the current pandemic context.

Value for Money

The safeguarding initiatives have ensured a more equitable reporting and complaints resolution mechanism for BRAC employees. BRAC has now developed organisation-wide ownership of safeguarding management.

Lessons/recommendations

1. FCDO's direction and technical assistance on safeguarding management helped BRAC to develop its organisational capacity and to strengthen systems. BRAC has made excellent progress in ensuring safeguarding for BRAC staff. However, BRAC should continue embedding safeguarding in all programmes, so that beneficiaries are further empowered to report cases and an efficient case management system is fully developed.

Output Number and Title	8. Improved evidence of value for money for SPA and the modality			
Output Score	A			
Impact weighting (%):	5%	Impact weighting revised since last AR?	N	
Output Indicator	Starting Target	Final Logframe Target	Final Result Achieved	Indicator Score
8.1 Status of usage of BRAC VfM framework	VfM reports produced as per frameworks (4 programmes)	VfM reports produced as per frameworks (4 programmes)	six-monthly VFM Reports (BEP, HNPP, SDP, and UPG) have been shared with SPA II partners	Met expectations: A
8.2 Status of Evidence tracking	Evidence produced	Evidence produced	Synthesis of existing (internal and external) research was completed by August 2020. The review and assessment on the additionality of the modality for BRAC was completed and shared with SPA II partners in October 2020.	Met expectations: A

This output scored A. BRAC met expectations against both indicators.

In 2019 BRAC developed a comprehensive VFM framework for programmes to which the majority of SPA II funding was allocated (UPG, SDP, BEP and HNPP and GJD). Using the framework, the programmes linked the indicators to specific activities and incorporated those into the reporting system. This allowed BRAC to systematically report data. Initially the programmes did not have all the disaggregated data required for FCDO's VfM framework (economy, efficiency, effectiveness and equity). FCDO facilitated a number of training sessions for BRAC staff to enhance the

²² An expert organisation on safeguarding

VfM capacity of individual programmes. So far, the programmes have submitted two rounds (2019 and 2020) of Mid-year and Annual VfM reports to FCDO. BRAC has integrated VfM for all programmes and departments to track its own efficiency over time. The quality of VfM reporting shows good understanding of the core concepts as well as nuanced understanding of changes in context.

BRAC has a long history and culture of results-based management practices. However, BRAC no longer has its own Research and Evaluation Division (RED), which previously served BRAC's research, evaluation, management, and action research implementation space and repository. The different research groups that were under BRAC RED are currently nested within different research institutions of BRAC University. Therefore, indicator 8.2 was introduced to ensure that SPA II relevant research and evaluation reports were collected and placed with an owner (namely PRL) for setting up this particular strand of BRAC's knowledge management. This output target led to easy access, use, dissemination of different BRAC programmes' research and evaluation findings as well as increasing evidence-based visibility of these programmes' effectiveness.

Lessons/ Recommendations

- BRAC has benefitted from the VfM framework - programmes are now able to monitor and report on economy, effectiveness, efficiency and equity. This is in line with BRAC's overarching ambition to become a more impactful and effective organisation. BRAC senior leadership should continue investing in developing an organisational culture that upholds VfM principles, beyond SPA II.

Output Number and Title	10.1.1 Create awareness among Government ministries/agencies about BRAC UPG approaches, particularly targeting and graduation in Bangladesh			
Output Score	A			
Impact weighting (%):	5%	Impact weighting revised since last AR?	No and New output since 2019/20	
Output Indicator	<i>Starting Target</i>	Final Logframe Target	Final Result Achieved	Indicator Score
Indicator 10.1.1 Status of policy brief on Graduation development and submission to the GoB 8 th 5yr plan	Policy brief submitted to GOB	Policy brief submitted to GOB	1. Policy Brief shared with SPA II partners in UPG advocacy 2. Policy Brief submitted to GoB	Output met expectation considering the impact: A

This output scored A. BRAC met expectations on the sole indicator.

As an agreed advocacy action for the UPG model, BRAC submitted a policy brief to General Economic Division of Government of Bangladesh to include the graduation approach in 8th Five-Year Plan (FYP) as one of the national poverty reduction strategies. The policy brief recommended that GoB explore promising models such as UPG for appropriate coverage, targeting and selection of social protection beneficiaries facilitated by NGOs. The policy also recommended investing in scaling up livelihoods programme for the extremely poor so that they can break the poverty cycle. BRAC engaged in a series of discussions with senior government officials and organised several field visits to demonstrate results. This contributed to sensitising senior government officials, such as the Senior Secretary of Cabinet Division, on extreme poverty work. However, the draft 8th FYP does not explicitly include the BRAC graduation approach.

Value for Money

The output has not been fully effective in increasing BRAC's influence and leverage, both nationally and internationally. SPA as a collective platform for FCDO, DFAT and BRAC could not fully utilise the knowledge and evidence generated by UPG and other promising practices to strategically influence wider development policies in Bangladesh. This was a missed opportunity.

Lessons/recommendations

- A lesson learnt from influencing the 8th FYP with the UPG model is that influencing government policy requires considerable time and long-term engagement. BRAC could develop a detail advocacy plan to engage with relevant government agencies with a particular focus on how BRAC can support government in lifting extremely poor households out of poverty at a scale using experiences of the UPG model. This requires a shift from promoting BRAC's model to engaging in a collaborative process for developing government's own approach for addressing extreme poverty using learning from the UPG model.

Output Number and Title	10.1.2 Promotion of BRAC good practice on inclusive skills development that to key stakeholders in Bangladesh
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Output Score	A			
Impact weighting (%):	5%	Impact weighting revised since last AR?	No & New output since 2019/20	
Output Indicator	<i>Starting Target</i>	Final Logframe Target	Final Result Achieved	Indicator Score
Indicator 10.1.2 # of people reached in events/summits during the SPA II period arranged in collaboration between GoB and BRAC and with participation of other SPA partners	2000 people	2000 people	2032 people	Output met expectations: A

This output scored A. BRAC met expectations on the sole indicator.

BRAC was a core, contributing partner alongside GoB in planning the International Skills Conference (March 2019). In July 2019, BRAC also organised World Youth Skills rallies in eight divisional cities in Bangladesh followed by World Youth Skills Day celebration at the BRAC Centre. Bangladesh Government representatives and SPA partners were present on both occasions. SDP also organised nine online webinars and seminars/workshops in collaboration with GoB, SPA partners, and other programmes of BRAC which contributed to promoting BRAC's good practice on inclusive skills development.

Value for Money

These events were effective in creating collaboration and partnerships between national and international institutions. The International Skills conference ended with a pledge by development partners and government for strategic partnerships to strengthen skills development. The importance of developing partnership with local government was reinforced and government expressed interest in future collaboration to organise events jointly.

Lessons/recommendations

1. The skills conference recognised that policy reforms are needed for the skills development of informal sector workers as the informal economy plays an important role in employment generation. BRAC should continue to seek opportunities to influence policies highlighting the importance of the informal sector.

Output Number and Title	10.2.1 Joint international promotion of lessons learning from effective BRAC programmes and partnerships.			
Output Score	A			
Impact weighting (%):	5%	Impact weighting revised since last AR?	No and New output since 2019/20	
Output Indicator	<i>Starting Target</i>	Final Logframe Target	Final Result Achieved	Indicator Score
Indicator 10.2.1 # of international conferences/events with participation by two or more SPA partners to promote BRAC programmes	Two global conference participated by two partners in promoting BRAC programmes	Two global conference participated by two partners in promoting BRAC programmes	Two global conferences attended	Output met expectations: A

This output scored A. BRAC met expectations on the sole indicator.

The Urban Development Programme (UDP) participated in the tenth session of the World Urban Forum (WUF) 2020 in the UAE in February, along with FCDO. This led to collaboration with UN-HABITAT to undertake joint interventions for improving the living conditions of urban low-income people in UDP working areas. The learning from the WUF also contributed to the improvement of City Development Federation housing activities. BRAC UDP jointly with France Ville Durable hosted a side event called 'Building a culture of resilience: designing local processes, drawing from community-based innovations furthering social inclusion and cultural preservation'. The Health Nutrition and Population Programme (HNPP) participated at the 75th UN General Assembly as a side panellist alongside speakers from the Canadian Government, Gates Foundation and FCDO in September 2020. HNPP hosted a side event called 'The power of feminist civil society organisations in addressing compound crises' and featured speakers from different parts of the world. BRAC shared lessons on how its health programme adapted its activities to ensure access to essential healthcare and nutrition services for millions of women and girls across the country to protect them from the long-term secondary impacts of the pandemic.

Value for Money

HNPP's experience helped participants of various government and non-government agencies from the global south to better understand how to ensure continuation of essential health and nutrition services for vulnerable groups such as pregnant women, mothers of new-borns, and adolescent girls.

Lessons/recommendations

- BRAC's learning on what works and why is hugely relevant for global development partners. BRAC could seek opportunities to organise and showcase BRAC development approaches and share innovations and promising proven practices as this would contribute to foster global south partnerships and strengthen BRAC's global profile. FCDO should continue to promote BRAC as a centre of development expertise, innovation, and adaptive programming.

Output Number and Title	10.3.1 Evidence of value for money for SPA and the modality			
Output Score	A			
Impact weighting (%):	5%	Impact weighting revised since last AR?	No & New output since 2019/20	
Output Indicator	<i>Starting Target</i>	Final Logframe Target	Final Result Achieved	Indicator Score
Indicator 10.3.1. Agreement among partners on the VfM evidence to be produced.	Define VfM for SPA by partners (workshop in 2019) VfM Framework produced for four programmes with technical advice from FCDO by October 2019	Agreed VfM framework produced	Achieved: VfM was defined by FCDO in August 2019 workshop. VfM framework produced for UPG, SDP, HNPP and BEP	Output met expectations: A

This output scored A. BRAC met expectations on the sole indicator.

SPA partners reached an agreed definition of VfM during the development of the VfM framework. BEP, HNPP, SDP and UPG produced three reports on the status of individual programmes' VfM. BRAC also commissioned a study to assess the additionality of the SPA modality for BRAC. It centred on eight propositions describing the additional value of the SPA to BRAC beyond financial transfers in traditional project form. While the VfM focus of Output 8 was on the effectiveness of the SPA VfM framework, this output largely focused on processes through which VfM results were achieved.

Value for Money

BRAC programmes have strong data and have adopted an evidence driven approach. However, the reports were not initially able to frame programmes in terms of economy, efficiency and equity from an FCDO VfM perspective. FCDOs work on VfM has been particularly useful and effective in tracking equity and recording examples of programmatic efficiency.

Lessons/recommendations

- The VfM framework has enabled BRAC to track and monitor how each programme is progressing on economy, efficiency, effectiveness and equity. However, BRAC needs to define how it wants to report on all four Es, rather than focusing more on efficiency. A practical way forward could be to reflect on the reports produced by the four programmes and identify the areas for improvement.

Output Number and Title	C10.4.1 Increased access to good policy practices for an effective and timely COVID-19 planning and response in Bangladesh			
Output Score	A+			
Impact weighting (%):	5%	Impact weighting revised since last AR?	Yes, and New output in 2020/21	
Output Indicator	Starting Target	Final Logframe Target	Final Result Achieved	Indicator Score
C10.4.1 Number of policy advocacy tools delivered to the GoB, regarding timely/appropriate actions for national COVID-19 response	-	Six advocacy tools deployed by BRAC	Eight advocacy tools deployed by BRAC	Output moderately exceeded expectations: A+

This output scored A+. BRAC moderately exceeded expectations against the sole indicator.

BRAC's Advocacy for Social Change (ASC) proactively gathered evidence of the impacts of COVID on the economy and the informal sector in 2020. BRAC was able to generate relevant analysis and recommend changes required to make local and national Government responses more effective. ASC completed two rapid assessments called the *Khichuri* (hotchpotch) Index to understand the net impact of economic changes (due to COVID-19) on the food security of people who depend on daily wages. The findings were included in the BRAC Situation Reports submitted

to the GoB. BRAC held five online seminars and published three policy briefs leading to some of the following achievements':

1. Following online seminars on the economic impact of COVID-19 on agricultural markets and producers (June 2020), women-led Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) (October 2020) and women-led informal sectors (November 2020), Bangladesh Bank allowed a time extension on its refinancing scheme targeting farmers. This allowed optimal utilisation of the stimulus package (29 December 2020). Bangladesh Bank also launched a digital dashboard allowing real-time monitoring of stimulus package disbursement (9 March 2021), and removed all loan processing/reschedule/restructure fees for agriculture and the cottage, micro, small and medium enterprise sectors (10 June 2021).
2. BRAC recommended steps to reintegrate migrant workers returning due to COVID-19 during a consultation on the national budget (May 2020). In response, the Bangladesh Government took affirmative action by initiating a non-collateral loan scheme at 4% interest through Probashi Kallyan Bank (Expatriate Welfare Bank).
3. As the secretariat of the Leave No-one Behind (LNOB) platform in Bangladesh, BRAC facilitated a joint declaration where nine partner NGOs recommended setting up mobile COVID-19 testing booths for marginalised urban populations (April 2020). In response, the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) scaled up its network of COVID testing booths across Bangladesh (June 2020).

Value for Money

BRAC's evidence-based policy advocacy contributed to changing a number of Bangladesh Government's policies and procedures to combat the impact of COVID-19. This helped enable millions of poor people in Bangladesh during the pandemic to maintain and restore their livelihoods.

Lessons/recommendations

1. Data and evidence from multiple BRAC programmes, including UPG, BEP, HNPP, and BRAC Enterprises was used by ASC to redesign its response to COVID-19. BRAC should consider documenting the learning emerged from the influencing work facilitated by ASC and share widely.

D: Risk

Overview of programme risk during the past year and over the life of the programme, drawing on FCDO's Risk Management Policy and Risk Appetite Statement and wider risk guidance.

SPA II's overall risk rating at approval was 'moderate'. During the programme, BRAC's approach to risk management evolved significantly. SPA partners worked closely with BRAC Risk Management Services (RMS) to ensure potential risks were identified, analysed, and managed. It also shared separate fraud reports with progress on each case; and provided clarifications as needed. With technical assistance from FCDO, BRAC prepared a risk appetite statement which was incorporated into BRAC's Risk Policy and Framework in 2019.

In the SPA II risk register, a total of 19 risks were identified during the last five years, of which 11 showed a decreasing trend as a result of effective mitigation measures. During the pandemic BRAC identified the risk of exclusion of the poorest of the poor as a growing risk. This resulted in BRAC adapting its cost-recovery models and self-financing target in 2020.

Maintaining financial stability will continue as a risk, as donor financing remains uncertain due to declining aid budgets and as a result of the pandemic. This also reflects the progress Bangladesh has made in recent decades, and a growing sense that the Government ought to be able to fund a greater share of Bangladesh's development. Together, these lead to a significant risk of BRAC being unable to deliver fully against its emerging 2021-2025 strategy. BRAC is keenly aware of this, and that some adjustments are likely to be required. PRL team has been strengthened to coordinate with donors, including current and potential new SPA donors, and to mobilise new fund-raising initiatives. BRAC has micro-finance, dairy, enterprises, and investments which will continue subsidising its development programmes. However, there is a significant risk that there might be reduction in the results BRAC is able to deliver, meaning some of the poorest and most vulnerable groups might see a reduction in BRAC activities.

Safeguarding risks under SPA II were significant, and came to the fore in 2018 when a series of safeguarding scandals (not associated with BRAC) rocked the aid sector. With strong leadership from its board, BRAC invested heavily in developing its systems for reporting, recording and managing safeguarding and in training staff to ensure increased awareness. BRAC ensured mitigation measures were in place to deal with any reputational risk which could arise from a serious fraud or safeguarding incident.

E: Programme Management: Commercial and Financial Performance, Monitoring and Evaluation

Summarise the performance of partners and FCDO, notably on commercial and financial issues, and including VfM measures of economy and efficiency.

Programme Management

There has been frequent and collaborative communication between SPA partners at senior and working levels, both bilaterally and through regular working group (six-weekly) and Steering Committee meetings (six-monthly). FCDO was invited to participate, as an observer, in meetings for BRAC's Governing Body. Based on Steering Committee decision in 2019, a total of six Technical Working Groups (TWGs) were reconvened focusing on extreme poverty, education, skills, disability inclusion, gender, and advocacy. However, all TWGs were not fully active and there are areas for improvement to provide systematic feedback to the SPA Steering Committee. The partners faced challenges in agreeing and updating the SPA II Results Framework and annual milestones against the output areas. This was largely due to the Results Framework not being developed at the outset of SPA II, and having to be pulled together at speed ahead of the 2017 Annual Review. This resulted in an overly complex Results Framework, with a multiplicity of outputs and indicators, which proved challenging for all parties to track. In addition, six-monthly progress reports and annual programme/departmental reflection reports were not standardised across programme teams/departments. The reports provided variable data, evidence, and analysis; which could be improved. The coverage, frequency, and timeliness of reporting could be enhanced. BRAC was proactive in communicating/sharing programme updates as recommended in the Mid-Term Review 2018 and Annual Review 2019.

Commercial

BRAC has come a long way in transforming its commercial approach compared to 2016. The use of technology-enabled Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) across the majority of its activities has made the commercial process fast, efficient, and effective. 90% of procurement now takes place through e-tender allowing access to international suppliers. ERP has enhanced green procurement processes by heavily reducing paper consumption. BRAC updated its Procurement Guidelines in February 2021. Procurement thresholds were updated, and some lower value procurement is now delegated to programme teams. Through delegation of 20% of total requisitions, the procurement team is now able to focus on more complex and strategic issues including emergency response to COVID-19 needs.

Financial

BRAC has a robust governance framework for financial management, supported and overseen by a Finance and Audit Committee. At each Annual General Meeting, the General Body adopts annual audited financial statements, approves the annual budget, and appoints external auditors.

BRAC provided FCDO with annual audited financial statements within the stipulated time and submitted an Independent Fund Utilisation Report in June 2020 providing the necessary assurance that FCDO funds were used for BRAC's development programmes only. Financial assessment of downstream partners was controlled through the Audit and Finance Committee. BRAC staff monitored downstream NGOs throughout the partnership, its Internal Audit Department audited each field office each year and external auditors were engaged annually to audit the NGOs' financial statements.

BRAC's annual financial statements were audited by external auditor Nurul Faruk Hasan & Co, a member firm of Deloitte for FY2020 whereby the auditor gave a true and fair view, in all material respects. As per the April 2020 to March 2021 Fund Utilization Review Report BRAC spending on development programmes was £139m (Including Humanitarian Crisis Management Programme, HCMP) with donor grants accounting for approximately £116m (of which 18% was FCDO's contribution). The remainder included BRAC's own funds, cross-subsidisation from the profit of BRAC enterprises, loans from micro-finance and proceeds from cost recovery.

Overall, FCDO's contribution to BRAC's development and humanitarian programmes stood at 36% over the entire SPA II period, and 21% in 2020. All payments were made to BRAC in arrears and no payments were made in advance of need. Our entire SPA II contribution to BRAC, £221,800,000, was spent by December 2020. Of this amount, £2.9m was used for BRAC's COVID-19 pandemic response and £54.83m was International Climate Finance (ICF), delivering activities in line with ICF KPI-1 ensuring 2,730,386 people were supported by ICF programmes to cope with the effects of climate change during the project period (2016- 2020). FCDO directly spent an additional £35,525.92 for the monitoring and evaluation component during the programme period. This included providing data protection technical assistance for BRAC to ensure that the organisation met the highest ethical standards in response to a recommendation made in the 2018 Annual Review.

Lessons/Recommendations

1. FCDO has traditionally accounted for its disbursements to BRAC as core contributions and recorded as expenditure at the point the payment is made. In any future engagement (if any) FCDO should ensure that resource adjustments (accruals) are applied (FCDO).

Monitoring and Evaluation

While the SPA II Results Framework (RF) was very comprehensive, this led to it being overly-complex. The data needs for the RF at times encouraged BRAC to create a parallel system just for donor reporting that was an ineffective use of resources. For any future programme, the focus of FCDO monitoring engagement should be on supporting BRAC to improve its own monitoring systems for better decisions. The FCDO programme logframe should be based on BRAC's own frameworks to avoid the creation of a system with the sole purpose of donor reporting.

BRAC has a long tradition of commissioning and using good quality evaluations and research, which FCDO could have utilised more effectively. Any future programme to fund BRAC should focus more on cross-organisational learning. In addition, any planned evaluation should build on the existing BRAC commissioned evaluations and research.

Date of last narrative financial report	26 August 2021	Date of last audited annual statement	31 May 2021
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Reference documents

1. FCDO SPA II Business case
2. SPA II Result Framework and achievements
3. SPA II Mid-Year Progress Reports and Annual Progress Reports
4. BRAC self-assessment of PCR and relevant research papers of all BRAC Programme
5. SPA II Mid Term Progress Report

Commercial

6. Review of BRAC procurement guideline and implementation procedure
7. FCDO led Commercial Expertise Review 2019 of BRAC
8. BRAC Vendor Relationship Process

Financial

9. All six-monthly fund utilisation reports and payment request
10. All annual fund utilisation review reports

Value for Money (VfM)

11. Revised BRAC VfM Framework with benchmarks for FCDO
12. Value for Money Reports 2019 and 2020 (BEP, SDP, HNPP, UPG and GJD programmes)